TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

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Donald W. Zimmerman, who gives us the Lone Elm Story" on Page 1, is director of Town and Country Church Work for the Presbyterian Synod of Kansas. His address 1326 N. Wheeler Street, McPherson, Kansas.

On Page 4, Ann M. Lingg tells about the work of the Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey.

"In the few generations that Americans have tilled their land, fertility has been lost and more than one-fourth of the topsoil has disappeared," writes Marshall Schirer in "Prodigal America" on Page 5. The author is a Baptist minister, serving at Spring Hill, Kansas.

Dr. Benson Y. Landis presents another article in his series on American poets who have emphasized rural and religious values. For "Bryant's Theatre of Earth," see Page The entire collection of these articles is now printed in book form, and may be procured from the Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., for 50 cents per copy. It is entitled *Poetry and Rural Life.*

Notes about the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, which met at St. Louis, Missouri, October 16-18, 1956, appear on Page 10.

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January, 1957

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The Lone Elm Story

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PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

DONALD W. ZIMMERMAN

• In 1943 Lone Elm, like many other towns, was suffering from erosion. The waves of "to-city" migration, the drift toward larger farms, and the streams of social change were depleting the human resources of the small village and its surrounding trade territory. Where once two churches had thrived, there were now two congregations with inadequate leadership. The Methodist Church was served by a college student who came each week-end to preach in Lone Elm and Kincaid, some five miles away. The Presbyterians had been without services for several years.

Cooperating

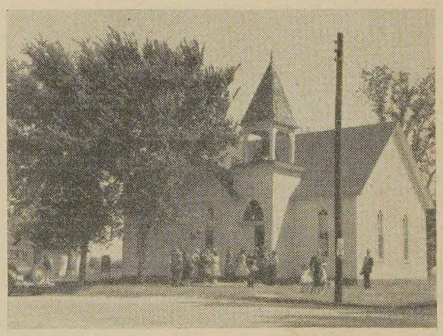
Unlike some other communities, Lone Elm did something about their plight. In September, 1943, the two Sunday schools were united into one. The boys and girls of both denominations gathered in the Presbyterian building for their classes and departmentalized worship. Their parents and older brothers and sisters met in the Methodist building. Because there was no Presbyterian minister all of the families came together in the Methodist sanctuary for the worship services each Sunday. Soon, a Presbyterian was the Superintendent of the Sunday school. Methodist and Presbyterian teachers mingled freely together. When Dr. Charles I. Coldsmith, Superintendent of the Ottawa District of the Methodist Church, came for quarterly conferences he did not know whether it was a Methodist or a Presbyterian who stood to give the report of the Sunday school activities.

In this little village with a population of less than one-hundred and a trade territory of limited area Sunday school attendance averaged nearly one-hundred people. With two buildings and ample teacher resources a departmentalized school could be efficiently maintained. If the Wesleyan and Calvinistic traditions had ever been important in Lone Elm, they had lost their divisive nature. Although families knew to which church they belonged, a stranger could never tell.

This cooperative Sunday school thrived for ten years. The people were so happy with the arrangement that further steps seemed appropriate. Dr. Coldsmith called a meeting of the two congregations in the spring of 1953. He invited the Rev. Marion L. Moyes, Chairman of National Missions for Neosho Presbytery; the Rev. Dean Stephens, moderator of the Presbyterian Session; and the writer to attend. Thirty-three Lone Elm people responded to the call. After appropriate prayers and opening remarks Dr. Coldsmith stated his case: Here are two church buildings, twenty-two Presbyterians and ninety-four Methodists. You now work harmoniously and efficiently as a Sunday school. Why not work together in all of your church programs?

After much discussion the people voted to extend their cooperative agreement to other areas of church work. Messrs. Ralph Lord and T. A. Church and Mrs. Wilbur Keplinger were to represent the Presbyterians on a committee to draft a new agree-

(*Continued on Page 2*)



Methodist Church
Lone Elm, Kansas

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(Continued from Page 1)

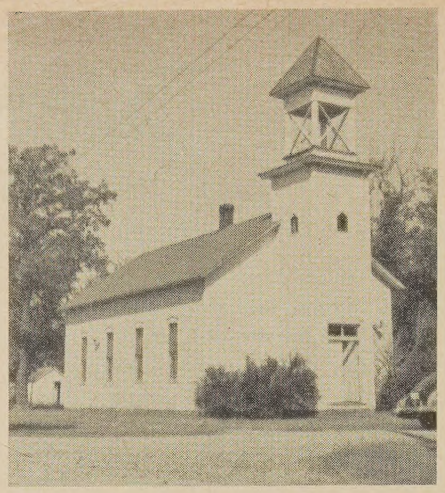
ment. The Methodists were to be represented by Messrs. Harvey Spangler, Carl Kulp, and Harold Stout. Dr. Coldsmith and the writer were to represent their denominations and to guide the committee along a course which would avoid legal entanglements and denominational disapproval.

The first and only real sign of cleavage between the two denominational groups came later the same evening when the committee of six became deadlocked over its choice of a chairman. A Presbyterian and a Methodist were nominated. Several votes were taken before the tie vote was broken. Finally, Harold Stout was elected chairman and the committee adjourned to meet later.

Federation

Actually, the committee met three times before the articles of federation were ready for congregational and denominational approval. Before the first meeting of the committee the writer prepared a work sheet for study by each of the committee members. This work sheet defined a federated church as one in which two or more congregations maintain a unified program under united ministerial leadership, but continue their separate denominational connections. As a guiding principle it was suggested that every type of cooperative activity which could be carried on harmoniously should be established by the articles of federation. Activities which would create a lack of harmony were, for the time being, to be done separately. Following these introductory statements, the work sheet suggested items for committee consideration. These included the name of the church, the composition of the membership, the ownership of the property, the arrangement for pastoral leadership, the budget of the church, the division of benevolences, the administrative organization of the church, and the problems of denominational supervision. Alternative solutions were suggested for each of these problems.

After three meetings, the Articles of Federation were in final form.



Presbyterian Church
Lone Elm, Kansas

Previous cooperation through the Sunday school had developed a spirit of unity which could not be daunted by details of church administration. One Presbyterian member of the committee, feeling that the Methodists had gotten the best of the Presbyterians at a certain point declared, "I think we've been sold down the river, but I'm for union so let's go ahead."

Leadership

Because the Presbyterians could not promise to provide pastoral leadership, it was agreed that the Lone Elm Community Church would be served by the Methodists on a circuit with Kincaid. After increasing the budget considerably, the committee was assured by Dr. Coldsmith that the new pastor would be a resident man. He would live in Kincaid, but that was nearer than the college where their former student minister had resided. There was to be a united treasury. Benevolences—except those especially designated—were to be divided in proportion to the membership of the churches. When the membership changed, the benevolence ratio would change. The property was to be held by the respective churches. However, a joint board of trustees was to maintain all of the property with funds from the united treasury. The organization of the church was strangely similar to the typical Methodist official board, but adjustments were made to assure equitable representation. The Methodist District Superintendent was to call and conduct the usual quarterly conferences, but a representative of the Presbytery was also to be present and to conduct any Presbyterian meetings which might be needed. The membership of the church was to be carried on two rolls and each new member would be given his choice of denominational affiliation.

Both congregations unanimously approved the Articles of Agreement when reported by the committees. Later in the autumn of 1953 both the Presbytery of Neosho and the Kansas Conference gave their official approval. The Community Church of Lone Elm was a reality.

Three years later the congregations remain unswervingly true to the principles of cooperation. There have been some minor adjustments to be made. Some misunderstandings might have been avoided by better denominational supervision. On the whole they have been good years. The new Methodist minister, an effective member of his conference, told this writer that the next step would be enlarged buildings to carry on the educational work of the church. This means inter-denominational adjustments, possibly the mutual exchange of property. It means more than that. It means that when people agree to work together in a cooperative venture the church outgrows its equipment.

From the outset, the writer, himself a Presbyterian, believed that within three years time the Presbyterians would have become so much a part of the federation and so accustomed to Methodist procedures that they would want to disband and create a Methodist congregation as the only Christian fellowship in the community. For that reason an option was attached to the Articles of Federation permitting a reconsideration of the matter after three years.

This forecast proved to be wrong. The articles of federation are to stand as they are. Although the Presbyterians were weaker than the Methodists and had no clergyman of their denomination to encourage them, they received more members during the trial period than did

their Methodist brethren. Perhaps the Methodists leaned over backwards to be fair, but no-one worries about that. The important thing is that two churches with two buildings have one program. All of the community looks to one church for its spiritual life. They find it in the Lone Elm Community Church (Methodist and Presbyterian).

A Church Distribution Study

• A total of 80 bulletins, in five series, is being published between September, 1956, and November, 1957, reporting the results of a study carried on in cooperation with 114 religious bodies. The general title is *Churches and Church Membership in the United States;* the subtitle is "An Enumeration and Analysis by Counties, States and Regions." The bulletins are published by the Office of Publication and Distribution, National Council of Churches, for the Bureau of Research and Survey. The study was supported by a grant from a Foundation.

The study is an effort to gather the statistics of churches and church membership for the year 1952 and to relate these findings to certain data in the 1950 United States Census of Population. All of the 251 religious bodies listed in the 1953 *Yearbook of American Churches* were invited to participate. The 114 bodies that cooperated report 182,856 local churches with 74,125,462 members. Thus the church membership included was considerably over three-fourths of the 92,277,129 members reported in 1952 in 285,277 local churches. While most of the 137 religious bodies not participating are relatively small, some are large. Among the large bodies not included are the Negro denominations, the Churches of Christ, and the Church of Christ, Scientist. The total number of members reported was equal to over 49 per cent of the total population of the United States in 1950.

A few items from the first four bulletins follow:

For 103 religious bodies reporting, data on membership per local church reveal 160,448 local Protestant churches with an average membership of 240 persons. The Roman Catholics reported 15,726 parishes with an average membership of 1,884 persons.

The total population, not Negro, per Protestant church was 814; the total population, not Negro, Roman Catholic or Jewish, per Protestant church was 605. The total population, not Negro, Protestant, or Jewish, per Roman Catholic church was 5,801.

Protestant strength is greatest in the South, and least in the Northeast, while the Roman Catholic situation is the reverse. Wide variations occur among the states when church membership is compared with population.

A listing of Bulletins, with publishing dates planned, follows:

Series A. Major Faiths by Regions, Divisions, and States. (Four bulletins, published September, 1956.)

Series B. Denominational Statistics by Regions, Divisions, and States. (Eight bulletins, about November 23, 1956.)

Series C. Denominational Statistics by Regions, Divisions, and States —the basic data. (55 bulletins, from January, 1957, through September, 1957.)

Series D. Denominational Statistics by Standard Metropolitan Areas. (6 bulletins, about October, 1957.)

Series E. Analyses of Socio-Economic Characteristics (7 bulletins, available about November 14, 1957.)

The entire plan is fully described in Series A, No. 1.

New York Conference for Religious Writers

• New York's first state Religious Writers' Conference, described as "an analytical look at a rapidly expanding field," was held at Syracuse November 2-3, 1956, under the joint sponsorship of the New York State Council of Churches and the School of Journalism at Syracuse University.

Designed to aid both the professional and the would-be writer, the conference program included workshop sessions on the religious short story, non-fiction article, book and curriculum writing, plus a survey of the writer's market.

Lyndon, Vermont

Photo by A. Devaney, Inc., N.Y.

Ministers of Music

ANN M. LINGG

• For the American concert-goer the name of Westminster Choir evokes a vision of young people in bright red robes, superbly trained in musicianship and solemn poise, who are participating in the performances of great choral masterworks. This past season they have appeared 10 times with the New York Philharmonic alone. To radio audiences and record fans, the choir is the most accomplished ensemble singing of its kind. But more than 500,000 parishioners know Westminsterites as their "Ministers of Music," who lead them on in the praise of God at regular church services. Many of those worshipers do not chant their devotion in English. About 30 Ministers of Music are active abroad, in Latin America, Mexico and the Philippines; in the Middle East and Malaya; in Japan, Korea, Formosa and, under constant threat, even in Communist China.

The red-clad choristers are students at the Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey. The Ministers of Music are its graduates. "Let the people praise Thee, O God, let all the people praise Thee" is the spiritual leitmotiv of the founders, Dr. and Mrs. John Finley Williamson; and they have resolved to carry it out "through the betterment of church singing by and for the members of the congregation."

At Westminster, congregational singing is regarded as "creative worship" which, at the same time, brings live music to small communities remote from the concert circuit. At Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio (pop. 30,000), for example, a Minister of Music led 580 parishioners in an Easter performance of Handel's *Messiah*. During the last war, four Westminsterites called themselves the "Singing Sentinels" and traveled an annual average of 80,000 miles to sing with workers and miners and for patients at hospitals and institutions. Often Westminster has provided a remedy against deterioration of congregational life. In Charlotte, North Carolina, not long ago, 100 couples hired a young woman Minister of Music who introduced a family choir system for churchgoers from two-and-a-half years to 80. The tiny congregation rapidly grew to 800 and eventually built its own church. Its members all agree with Dr. Williamson's theory that early group singing is most wholesome for the education of the young, for it develops proper breathing, stimulates circulation, improves carriage and posture, and teaches teamwork and discipline.

The Westminster story started 40 years ago, when John Finley Williamson, a pupil of the famed opera singers Herbert Witherspoon and David Bispham, underwent a throat operation and lost his voice. He had wanted to be a church and oratorio singer; now he aspired to a ministry. After eight years of working in a small church he became Minister of Music of Dayton's Westminster Presbyterian, which had a choir of 60. Always a musician at heart, he selected the music with affectionate care, and the congregation joined the choir with inspired devotion. He was not conscious of doing anything unusual, yet the church was always jammed; obviously people needed a special impulse to contribute their share in the sacred service. Williamson realized that only one fourth of America's 260,000 churches could afford to pay for music, so, supported by generous parishioners, he took his choir to churches in the vicinity. Ministers began to ask for his assistance in establishing similar groups. In 1926, when he had about 100 requests, he drew up the statutes for the Westminster Choir School, and on his Sunday school premises began to turn singers into choir leaders who would use music as a spiritual force.

Sponsored by Mrs. Harry E. Talbott, widow of the railroad pioneer, the chorus expanded and toured the United States and 15 European countries. Meantime, the school moved to Ithaca, New York, where the first 21 Ministers of Music got their diplomas in 1929, and three years later to Princeton, New Jersey, where it obtained the college charter under the exacting laws of the State.

However, it was a shoestring operation until, at the depth of the Depression, a private contribution helped the Williamsons to acquire a 40-acre property on which they now live in happy symbiosis with the Columbus (Ohio) Boys' Choir, which was founded by Westminsterite Herbert Huffmann.

No economic or political calamity has hampered the growth of this unique college; in May, ground was broken for a new $482,000 dormitory to accommodate 124 men. Under the general supervision of Dr. Williamson as President, and his wife, Rhea, as Dean, a faculty of some 40 specialists teaches music and religion, drama, languages and philosophy. An unusual atmosphere of congeniality and elation pervades the campus, an unusually high degree of spiritual concentration marks the concert work of the Westminster Choir.

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Thanks for Snow

• O God, who dost make all kinds of weather, we thank thee for the recently fallen snow as it lies over our fields, white and even like a well-woven blanket; as it protects the earth like the sheltering wings of a hen her brood; as it melts under the gentle sun, spreading water to the waiting land.

We thank thee, O God, for the good gift of snow. *Amen.*

—Mark Rich

• We belittle God when we beg for crumbs, while he stands before us in the Person of Jesus Christ and declares Himself to be the entire bread of life!

—Eugenia Price, in *Early Will I Seek Thee* (Fleming H. Revell Co.)

Town & Country Church

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Contributors of articles to TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH speak for themselves and not for the National Council of Churches or sponsoring organizations.

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

Prodigal America

MARSHALL SCHIRER

• The story of the prodigal son is often told and there are many interpretations that have been given to it. It is very seldom, however, that attention is given to the sin of the prodigal. He had wasted his substance. That which his father had given him was squandered on riotous living rather than used to maintain him comfortably with the necessities of life.

Americans, as a people, stand condemned for having committed the same sin. In the few generations that they have tilled their land, the soil has been allowed to blow and wash away. Fertility has been lost and more than one-fourth of the topsoil has disappeared. This situation has been viewed with alarm by many people. Angus McDonald, an assistant soil conservationist writing fifteen years ago, said that the felling of the first tree by the colonists in the New World was an act of great significance. "It marked the beginning of the era of the most rapid rate of wasteful land use in the history of the world."[1]

Grim Reminders

The experiences of nations much older than our own show what can happen when resources are wasted. King Solomon sent eighty thousand men to Lebanon to fell cedars for the temple. Another seventy thousand men were drafted to skid logs to the sea. These lumberjacks worked an area covering two thousand square miles. But today only four small groves of cedars remain. The largest of these has only four hundred trees on it. The problem has not been one of climatic change. It has been a case of men not being able to adjust to their resources and preserve them.[2]

Another grim reminder of past glory is seen in North Africa. During the time of Christ it was called the granary of Rome. In Timgad, the capitol, there were great storage bins. The public enjoyed theaters, great Roman baths, and marble flush-toilets. One of the Caesars claimed that a rainstorm blew over his tents and flooded the camp of his soldiers. Are we to conclude that it stopped raining in that area? Not according to geologists. Olive trees were planted in an unexcavated part of Timgad where there was no possibility of subirrigation. It was found that they will grow today very much as they did in the time of Christ. In another village trees were found that are fifteen hundred years old. The change has not been in the climate.[3] The people are at fault.

In America, trees have been cut down more rapidly than in Lebanon. Her people, too, have failed many times to replace them. Erosion, bare hillsides, and rocks have been the payment they have received for their folly. It takes half a million years to wash seven inches of topsoil from timberland. Actually soil builds up faster in timberland than the rate of runoff. Yet this same land could lose sixty-four tons of soil yearly if it had no covering. In addition to this, nearly one-third of the rainfall would be lost. At that rate seven inches of topsoil would be lost in the short period of eighteen years.

"Breadbasket of the World"

America has not been called the granary of the world, but it is not uncommon to hear her referred to as the breadbasket of the world. One of the major agricultural problems of this day is how to get rid of all

(*Continued on Page* 6)

[1] See Early American Soil Conservationists. Miscellaneous Publication No. 449, U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, October, 1941.

[2] See Lowdermilk, W. C. Conquest of The Land Through Seven Thousand Years. Agricultural Information Bulletin No. 99, U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service.

[3] Ibid. pp. 18 and 19.

(*Continued from Page 5*)

the surplus. Yet, there is already evidence of breakdown. The Southwest is plagued with drought. A part of this problem may be traced directly to land overuse. There are eroded areas that hundreds of dollars per acre would be needed to restore. We pray for rain, for we think that it holds the answer to problems of low productivity. But, will the rains help the soils we ruin? Each raindrop is a bomb with great potential. From one to one hundred tons of soil is broken apart on every acre during a rain. When the protective covering is gone from the land the blasted earth may be carried away.

It is entirely possible that it may be a blessing when the rains do not come. The soil is not wasted as badly. Perhaps God, in his providence, is holding his soil for a less destructive generation. Americans have a higher living standard than was enjoyed in North Africa. The great heights to which she soars will be meaningless if the soil which supports them is gone.

Let's take a flight into the realm of imagination. What can you see in the great floods which have devastated American property during the past few years? For some it is merely dirty water. But it is not that alone. The water contains the bodies of children yet unborn, community life, freedom, and churches. For all of these are directly dependent upon the soil. Visualize some of the greatest buildings in this country. They may some day be plundered and become the dwelling place for the scum of the earth. The rats may take over the fine basements and the wolves may play in the debris around them. Why? Because the soil will no longer support its people. The historians of the future would write only a one-sentence epitaph:

> *The United States of America—She exploited her resources faster than any nation in the world and was a world power for about thirty years.*

This could actually be written if Americans continue to be an exploitative people. In this she sins more than other nations which surround her.

The Future

But, as in the case of the prodigal son, there is still hope. The boy had first to come to himself. He had to understand that he was not worthy of that which had been entrusted to him. When that happened, he was prepared to go back and begin again. Americans have not been worthy of all the material things that God has given them. They still have an opportunity to rectify the mistakes of the past.

When Hezekiah was the king of Judah, he had an illness which threatened to be fatal. He prayed to God for healing, and his request was granted. After he was healed, envoys came from Babylon with letters and a gift from the son of the king, who had heard that he was ill. Hezekiah foolishly showed them all of his treasure, his armory, and his storehouses. The prophet Isaiah warned him that the day would come when all that they had seen would be taken away. He even revealed that Hezekiah's own sons would be carried to Babylon. But Hezekiah said that God's word was good. He was not concerned about the future. He thought that if there were peace and security in his own day that would be sufficient. Had he lived long enough, he could have seen his son bound in a Babylonian prison.

The destructiveness of this generation probably will not be felt too badly while it is still alive. But a Christian's concern must reach beyond himself. The generations of the future will pay the consequences for this generation's sins.

America has to be shown this sin of wastefulness. Surely then, she will "come to herself" and repent, as did the prodigal. As she becomes humble and faithful in her stewardship, God will pour out his bountiful material and spiritual blessings.

1957 Convocation

• The National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country will be held at Green Lake, Wisconsin, October 22-24, 1957. Detailed information will be presented in later issues of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH.

The Family Farm

• Because the politician has taken hold of the phrase, "the family farm," the opposition is now coming forth to query, to deride, to ridicule. "What," they ask, "is a family farm? How many acres? How much stock and machinery? How many in the family?"

Others, comparing near primitive conditions on farms handed down from generation to generation in some European areas, ask: "Is there merit in preserving them? Do we want to preserve poverty? Why is there something sacrosanct about the family farm?"

Those who attempt to confound by detailed questions are the doubting Thomases who, getting nowhere in their indecision, allow the rest of the world to pass them by. As for those who attempt to ridicule, if they would but descend from their ivory towers, they might learn that efficiency is not the be-all and end-all of life on a farm; or, for that matter, of life generally. They must learn, too, that those who sincerely defend the family farm as a way of life, and also as an efficient economic operation, do not thereby offer a blanket apology for every family farm venture.

The family is the basic unit of our society. It is in the family that love, respect and discipline are born and most effectively nourished. From the beginning of time, the family that was close to the land has been the most successful in retaining and building the sturdy virtues. Contrariwise, the impersonality of twentieth-century urban living has bred selfishness and erased practically every vestige of community life and culture. Similarly, the impersonality of the factory assembly line has done little to develop either individual responsibility or the satisfaction of a job well done.

Although human nature is showing some signs of rebellion against the congestion and turbulence that go hand in hand with steel and concrete, the relentless striving of industry for greater efficiency through bigness has quickened its pace. Actually, a unit like the family farm is, at the present time, the sole bastion—not so much against efficiency as against

many of the ills and evils that flow from the worship of efficiency as an end in itself. The defense of the family farm, therefore, does not stem from emotion but from the conviction that there are certain basic values worth saving and fighting for, even at the loss of some dollar efficiency.

The "factories in the field" continue to increase. Much of their labor force is obtained from the ranks of inefficient farm operators who have not been able to keep pace. But, if the cost-price squeeze is allowed to pinch much longer, even the efficient operator may not be able to stand the strain. The prospect is not pleasant: employees of farm factories or wards of the State. In either case, the solid advantages of family farm living would be obliterated, and in their place would rise the very dubious utopia of a kolkhoz kind of agricultural living.

That is why the family farm is worth saving. It may not be sacrosanct, but neither is it just a political slogan.

—Reprinted, with permission, from THE RURAL NEW YORKER, February 18, 1956

An American traveling in Syria became acquainted with a shepherd. Each morning, he noticed the shepherd carrying food to the sheep. The traveler followed him one morning and found that he was taking the food to one sheep that had a broken leg. As he looked at the animal, he said to the shepherd: "How did the sheep break its leg? Did it meet with an accident—fall into a hole?" "No," said the shepherd, "I broke this sheep's leg myself." "You broke it yourself?" queried the surprised traveler. "Yes. You see, this is a wayward sheep; it would not stay with the flock, but would lead the other sheep astray. Then it would not let me get near it. I could not approach it, and so I had to break the sheep's leg that it might allow me, day by day, to feed it. In doing this, it will get to know me as its shepherd, trust me as its guide, and keep with the flock."

—ROBERT BOYD MUNGER, in *What Jesus Says,* (Fleming H. Revell Co.)

Bryant's Theatre of Earth

BENSON Y. LANDIS

To him who in the love of Nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language . . .

These are the opening lines in what is often called the first great poem written in America. "Thanatopsis" was written in 1811 by William Cullen Bryant, who was born at Cummington, Massachusetts, in the heart of the Berkshires, in 1794. Thus at age seventeen he wrote verses which opened the era of American poetry. For sixty-five years the flame of his spirit burned on. In 1876 his writing of power poured forth in another well-known poem, "The Flood of Years."

Publication

The circumstances attending the publication of "Thanatopsis" are highly interesting. The first version of the masterpiece was found some years after it was written by Peter Bryant, the poet's father, a physician, among other papers in his desk, including a poem first entitled "Fragment," later "Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood." Dr. Bryant took his son's poem to Boston and handed it to Willard Phillips, then one of the editors of the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

Mr. Phillips soon thereafter read the poem to a meeting of the editors. One of these, Richard H. Dana, expressed his surprise by saying that Phillips had been misled—no one in America was capable of writing such poetry. When it was shown that the verses actually came from the Berkshires, the wise men editing the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW then insisted that the poem must have been written by the country doctor, not by his young son. It was published eventually in September, 1817, in somewhat different form from that finally given it by William Cullen Bryant in his first volume of poems in 1821. "Fragment" also appeared in the same issue of NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

A Young Genius

Before reaching the age of twenty-one the poet had also written "The Yellow Violet" and "To a Waterfowl." Of the latter Hartley Coleridge, the English author, gave the high praise of calling it "the best short poem in the English language," and so eminent an Englishman as Matthew Arnold is reported to have agreed with this judgment.

Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths dost thou pursue,
Thy solitary way?

Bryant entered Williams College and remained there for only two years, leaving to study law. He was admitted to the bar at Plymouth, and practiced law at Plainfield and Great Barrington. Although Bryant had good training for the law he had no taste for it. In 1825 he was made assistant editor of the New York newspaper, the EVENING-POST; in 1829 he became editor in chief; and in 1849, joint owner with John Bigelow. Through Bryant's long editorship the journal was Democratic and anti-slavery, a staunch supporter of the federal union. Bryant was in demand as a lecturer. He became a prominent and much loved figure as he walked the streets of New York, where he died in 1878. Bryant nurtured his rural interests by maintaining homes in Roslyn, Long Island, where his body was laid to rest, and in the old family homestead in the Berkshires. And many of his writings must be termed poems of the rural spirit.

Great Dramas of Life

For to William Cullen Bryant, as perhaps to a few poets who have lived, the good earth was a great theater in which the great dramas of life were eternally played. The early poems mentioned above were followed by "Green River," "A Winter

(*Continued on Page* 8)

Cascade Mountains, Washington — Photo by A. Devaney, Inc., N.Y.

(*Continued from Page 7*)

Piece," "The West Wind," "The Burial Place," "A Walk at Sunset." In "Green River" the poet reveals his daily pursuits and his own temperament. He pays his uncomplimentary respects to the practice of law and shows that a visit to a river restores his spirits.

An image of that calm life appears
That won my heart in my greener years.

"A Winter Piece" is a sort of a gallery of pictures of the woodland. When "the ills of life" had chafed his spirit, he "would wander forth and seek the woods . . . The sunshine on my path was to me as a friend." One critic has called his vivid imagery of the snow-covered hills, in this poem, surpassing "anything of the kind" in our language.

Mr. Bryant's first volume of verse was acclaimed in a limited but influential circle. Then, between 1821 and 1825, he began to produce verse interpreting the experience of the American Indian. During these four years he wrote thirty poems, more than in any other period of that length. He wrote "Song of the Stars," "March," "Hymn to the North Star," "A Forest Hymn," "June." "The Rivulet" was plainly about the stream that flowed near the homestead he loved.

Growing Mind

These poems and others enabled Bryant's friends and associates to perceive the personality that was emerging: He was a man whose range of interest and sympathy was wide; he was a poet acquainted with many measures who was to have a varied style; his was a growing, capacious mind sensitive to the stirrings in the society about him; he was a man whose faith seemed absolutely strong and serene. The publication of the poems was also to lead him from the Berkshires to the urban center. Friends of the dissatisfied lawyer helped him to secure literary employment in New York. The law books were closed forever and the household was moved to the city.

During the seven first years in New York, Bryant wrote forty poems while carrying on an arduous career as a journalist. Perhaps there was a bit of nostalgia, as well as ardent love of nature in the poem, "Lines on Revisiting the Country." His creative imagination expressed itself in such poems as, "The Hymn to the North Star," and "The Firmament." Although Mr. Bryant sometimes put the word "hymn" into the titles of his poems, few of his works seem to be in hymnals now. In the course of a short search I found only one of Bryant's works in a hymnal. This is in striking contrast to John Greenleaf Whittier's experience. He did not profess to write hymns, but soon found the churches singing many of his lines.

Productive Old Age

Like most Americans, Bryant took to travel. He went about America and wrote accounts for the readers of the EVENING POST. And he ventured to Europe. In 1834 he made a brief trip, which was cut short by the indiscretion of partners who got the POST into trouble from which Bryant had to rescue it. Nine years later he again went to Europe, and engaged in literary studies.

When he reached the late 40's and the 60's, volumes of his poems appeared, to be followed in 1876 by a complete edition of his poetical writings. Mr. Bryant was also a translator of note. High praise came to him for his translation of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, in 1870 and 1871. There are still those who admire the Bryant translations. Mr. Bryant was also an orator of note, excelling particularly in the delivery of eulogies.

Bryant began his career in a sort of dangerous way. He wrote great poetry before he was twenty. Could he continue? Would his life go on being productive? His was the unique achievement of continuing distinction to the end. He was in his old age still an ardent champion of human freedom, still an accurate observer of the scenery of his land while writing poetry to celebrate its beauty. Some of his poems are long, but even in this day they do not seem platitudes. There were vitality

and serenity and versatility in his person. Further, he was a man who made great affirmations. Often these took the form of stating the love of God through the manifestations of nature.

Farmers Union Films

Two Blades of Grass—16mm, B&W, 15 Min., Price: $16.00.

A co-ed takes her Easter vacation on a farm and discovers that there is quite a gap between what she pays in the grocery store for food and what the farmer receives. She also tries her hand at some farm chores, and learns something about farm family life.

What Price Plenty?—16mm, B&W, 15 Min., Price: $16.00.

Narrated by NBC Commentator Chet Huntley, this documentary film explores the extent and value of the United States' tremendous reserve stocks, depicts how they can be used at present, and speculates about their value in the future.

A Place of Plenty—16mm, B&W, 26 Min., Price: $30.00.

This highly dramatic film shows one family's search for abundance in a small Kansas farm community. It poses questions about how well we are caring for our underprivileged citizens, and probes into the resources available to communities in the event of natural disaster. An extremely high quality production with sharp emotional impact.

This is the Farmers Union—16mm, B&W, 27½ Min., Price: $30.00.

A documentary, portraying National Farmers Union from its origin in Point, Texas, more than 50 years ago to its present-day operations. It pictures NFU's scope, services and program, and focuses particular attention on legislative activities by members in Washington, D. C.

Inquiries and orders should be directed to National Farmers Union, Education Material Service, 1575 Sherman Street, Denver 3, Colorado.

The Community Service Record of Grange Boy Scout Troop 105 Mendon, New York

• The six-year history of Troop 105 has been characterized not only by excellent advancement, but by very outstanding service to the community and sponsoring organization.

Here are some of the major contributions of the troop over the six-year period:

1. The Scouts organized Explorer Post 105, also sponsored by the Grange; troop membership has continued practically 100 per cent in this senior Scouting organization.
2. For six consecutive years, the troop has provided the program for an entire Grange meeting by giving demonstration of Scout skills and training. This annual event has been repeated at the request of the Grange members.
3. The Scouts regularly assist Grange members in setting up tables and chairs for Grange dinners and events.
4. The troop gave a Scout demonstration and presented a Scout exhibit at the 1955 Grange Fair held at the Rochester War Memorial Auditorium.
5. The Scouts got the community of Mendon out of a real mess in the record snow fall of the past winter by shoveling out the Fire House driveways as well as the village walks and many private driveways. The town snow equipment was overwhelmed and long-delayed by the record fall. (This was an entirely volunteer Good Turn project on the part of the Scouts. They were offered money by villagers but they refused.)
6. Last Christmas Eve, for the fourth consecutive year, the Scouts organized and led Christmas caroling for the village shut-ins.
7. Last Christmas, for the second consecutive year, the Scouts of Mendon Troop 105 provided manpower for preparing and distributing the Red Cross Christmas baskets for the needy of the Mendon Township (covering 37 square miles of countryside as well as two villages, Mendon and Honeoye Falls).
8. Both this year and last during the month of May, the Scouts put up all the Mendon posters and banners for the combined Community Chest–Red Cross Drive.
9. Last year, Scouts and Explorers cooked an outdoor dinner for a large group attending the Teachers' Conservation Work Shop—a regional conservation meeting held at Mendon Ponds Park.
10. The Scouts and Explorers march as a complete unit with their colors in every Memorial Day parade.
11. In 1956 the Mendon troop made a financial contribution to the United States Olympic Fund.
12. Once a year, the Scouts simonize the fire trucks of the Mendon Volunteer Fire Company.
13. Participating in the National Conservation program of last year, the Scouts posted the entire township with Forest Fire Prevention posters.
14. This year and last, the Mendon Scouts planted a total of 20,000 trees in their Conservation Forestry Work.
15. During Fire Prevention Week, the Scouts ran an article in the local paper on safety measures.
16. The Mendon Scouts conduct three paper drives a year and an occasional scrap drive (this pays a good share of their individual expenses to the council's summer camp which they attend).
17. The Mendon Scouts attend and participate in all district and council events.

This record explains why so many Mendon Scouts and Explorers have earned their merit badges for Citizenship in the Community and Citizenship in the Home.

Change of Address

• If you are moving, please send your change of address to TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH. It takes several weeks to effect changes, and we do not want you to miss a copy.

From the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, Held at St. Louis, Missouri, October 16-18, 1956

What is the Convocation?

The Convocation is an informal assembly of individuals, held under the auspices of the Department of Town and Country Church of the National Council of Churches. It is held annually in different sections of the country. At the Convocation these persons worship together, educate and inspire one another, and formulate findings and recommendations. The persons who took part in the St. Louis meeting live in rural communities. They are pastors and lay people in local churches. They are administrators of numerous denominational and interdenominational agencies. They are teachers and writers, and students in colleges and seminaries.

Richard O. Comfort, Executive Director of the Department of Town and Country Church, greets Jeanie K. Sherman of Timber Lake, S. D.

New Horizons for Town and Country Churches

The 1956 Convocation took for its theme, "New Horizons for Town and Country Churches." Dr. Mark Rich of the Bible College of Missouri provided a background for the subject by giving a history of the Town and Country Church Movement. Dr. Mark A. Dawber, former executive secretary of the Home Missions Council of North America and one of the nation's outstanding Protestant leaders, spoke on "Issues Facing the Town and Country Church and The Place of the Town and Country Church in the Ecumenical Movement." Dr. Dawber said that sweeping social changes in rural and suburban life call for a "long overdue rechurching" in these areas. He warned that rechurching rural and suburban America cannot be done on the old basis of division and disunity among denominations, for "if there ever was a time when a united impact was necessary to the Church, that time is now," he said. "We must use every possible effort of cooperation to make possible a stronger Church to meet the urgent needs of the rapidly changing town and country communities."

Dr. Richard O. Comfort, executive director of the National Council's Department of Town and Country Church, spoke of the Future of the Town and Country Church Movement. He stressed the needs for evaluating our assets and for cooperation in a wide-world Town and Country Church Movement.

Mr. Howard Cowden, President of the Consumers Cooperative Association in Kansas City, speaking on the Agricultural Situation, said that "churches have reason to be concerned about the continued economic gap between agriculture and the rest of the economy." He urged the rural leaders to support cooperatives "because they help to preserve the family farm and they exemplify some basic tenets of democracy and Christianity."

Others who addressed the Convocation were Dr. David Lindstrom of the University of Illinois on "Rural World Needs"—this was confined to the needs of East Asia, where Dr. Lindstrom has been located for the past three years, teaching at the International Christian University in Japan—Dr. Samuel W. Blizzard of the University of Pennsylvania on "The Rural Minister and Community Change"; the Rev. Jeanie K. Sherman of Timber Lake, South Dakota, on "Serving Scattered Populations"; and the Rev. Russell Carter, National Council of Churches, on his work with the American Indians.

Dr. Lawrence Hepple, rural sociologist of the University of Missouri, conducted a panel presentation on the findings of a study of Missouri's rural churches, which was conducted over the past four years by the University of Missouri with the cooperation of the Bible College of Missouri and the Rockefeller Foundation. It covered 505 rural churches and 345 clergymen in six sample areas. The Missouri survey shows that the state's country churches are often located

Left to right: Samuel W. Blizzard, Jeanie K. Sherman and Lawrence M. Hepple

as far as six miles from settlements of potential parishioners. Church attendance in relation to number of church members, however, is 58.6 per 100 and in the small "sect-type" churches attendance is twice as great as in churches of established denominations. The average annual cash salary of Missouri's rural ministers is below the national average of $1,591. Pastors of established churches receive $1,812 per annum as compared with $871 for ministers of "sect" churches.

A broader picture of the life of the U.S. rural minister is given in the preliminary findings of the survey presented by Dr. Blizzard, based upon reports of 350 clergymen in rural areas across the country. It depicts him as a combination "spiritual mentor, family counselor, community organizer and village prophet," whose parishioners ask him to help solve a wide range of personal and community problems.

Discussion Groups

In addition to the general sessions of the Convocation, there were seventeen discussion groups to consider issues of concern to town and country church leaders. Among the areas considered were "Agricultural Policy," "Cooperation of Fringe Churches with Migratory Labor," "Church Cooperation" and "Cooperation with Community Agencies," "Sparse and Scattered Population Ministry," and "Recruiting and Training for the Town and Country Ministry."

Worship Services

The three unique worship services were conducted by Dr. Clarence Jordan of Koinonia Farms, Americus, Georgia. His messages were challenging and inspiring.

The Rev. George Whipple, Disciples minister at Flora, Indiana, conducted the song services, and Mr. Herbert Kolkmeyer, organist of the Centenary Methodist Church in St. Louis, where the Convocation was held, provided the accompaniments.

1956 Convocation Report

• The report of the 1956 Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, which met at St. Louis, Missouri, October 16-18, will soon be ready for distribution. It bears the title, *New Horizons for Town and Country Churches,* and may be procured from your denominational executive director of town and country church work or from the Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y. It sells for fifty cents per copy.

Youth Week

• January 27–February 3, 1957 marks the fourteenth annual observance of Youth Week. The observance of this week dates back to 1944 when a group representing the International Society of Christian Endeavor and the United Christian Youth Movement planned a special week in which to lay emphasis upon the youth of our churches and their unity in Christ. Since then it has been scheduled annually from the last Sunday in January through the first Sunday in February.

The United Christian Youth Movement, which now functions as the Youth Department of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., has prepared a packet of seven tools with which to develop a Youth Week observance in your church and your community. Items may be ordered separately. An order blank is enclosed with the material. The entire 1957 Youth Week Packet sells for 75 cents. It may be procured from the Department of Publication and Distribution, National Council of Churches, 120 East 23rd Street, New York 10, N.Y.

• It is a cheap slot-machine religion that is used as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Would you like to have peace of mind? Try religion. Would you like to get along better with members of your family, with those with whom you work at the office? Religion might help. Would you like to have a healthier body, a healthier mind? Try religion. Don't misunderstand me. Religion does give peace of mind; it does provide better relationships; it does mean healthy minds in healthy bodies. But religion is not a means to anything other than the presence of God. We should seek God, not for what we can get out of Him, but for what He can get into us. We should love our earthly fathers, not to increase our allowance or inheritance, but because of our appreciation and respect. We should seek to be used of God rather than seek to use God.

—Gaston Foote, in *Footnotes,* (Fleming H. Revell Co.)

Conservation — A Major Job in the Department of Agriculture*

GLADWIN E. YOUNG

• "The Department of Agriculture recognizes a strong national program of soil, water, forest, and range conservation as one of the basic necessities of American agriculture." This statement was made by Secretary Benson soon after he became Secretary of Agriculture.

Modern soil and water conservation and sound conservation of forests and range means putting land to the uses to which it is best suited and applying the necessary practices to prevent deterioration, increase production and build up soil productivity. It means making soils yield abundantly for an indefinite period. It means high-level sustained yields of forests. It means more dependable supply of clear water in our streams. It means profitable and efficient farming.

Resources

There are approximately 475 million acres of land in the United States now used for crops and rotation pastures. Only about 385 million of these acres are really well suited for cropping. This means there are now a little less than 2½ acres of crop land per capita.

In the next twenty-five years, 15 to 25 million acres of land now cropped will be taken up for cities, roads, and other non-agricultural purposes. In addition, another 10 million acres will probably be lost through unchecked erosion and other soil depleting processes. The amount of new land that may be brought into agricultural use through irrigation and drainage is not expected to equal the acreage lost through erosion and to non-agricultural uses.

Forests occupy one-third of this country's total land area. This is adequate forest land to grow all the timber we are likely to need. But there is a decided deficit in the larger trees and more preferred species. This is true despite the great strides that have been made in forest management in recent years. National forests, administered by the Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture, occupy 160 million acres. These national forests are at the headwaters of nearly all major river systems and have a significant influence on the nation's water supply.

Because of widespread drought in recent years the question has been raised as to whether there will be sufficient water to meet demands for agricultural purposes and at the same time meet the rapidly growing demands for urban and industrial uses. This presents a new and serious problem which will continue to grow as we continue to expand so tremendously our uses of water. More and more we must recognize that usable supplies of water are going to depend on soil conservation measures on the farms and forests of each watershed.

Do We Need the Land We Have?

The present burdensome surpluses of farm products is evidence that the capacity of our land to produce is in excess of the nation's capacity to consume.

A warning needs to be sounded, however, lest we permit this temporary or short-term problem to diminish the efforts on soil conservation and research upon which agriculture's efficiency and productivity is based.

Secretary Benson emphasized this point when he said, "I wish particularly to emphasize the temporary nature of any such reduction. (Referring to reduction in agricultural production that would result from the Soil Bank.) In the not-too-distant future we will need much greater output of farm products than we have today."

Regardless of any solution that may be found for dealing with current surpluses or preventing further accumulations, the nation cannot afford any reduction in the basic efficiency of agriculture. In the decade 1890-1900 each farm worker produced enough to feed seven additional persons. By 1950 each farm worker produced enough to feed 15. Because of this increased efficiency in the use of land and the application of science to agriculture, it has been possible for a larger and larger proportion of our population to expend its energies on the production of non-food items that contribute so enormously to our living standards. No one can quarrel with the contention that farm families should share equitably in this expanded prosperity.

In the next twenty to twenty-five years we must increase agricultural production by 30 to 40 percent in order to feed our increasing population, as well as they who are now being fed. We must obtain this increased agricultural production essentially from the land that is now devoted to agricultural uses. There is no new land.

That is why the Department of Agriculture does not intend to reduce its emphasis on assisting farmers with soil and water conservation on the farms, forests, and watersheds of this country.

President Eisenhower has stated that "the soil, water, and range and forest resources of the United States are the national foundation of our national economy. From them come our food, most of our clothing, much of our shelter. How well we protect and improve these resources will have a direct bearing on the future standard of living of the whole nation."

The Department's Role

It is the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture to bring to farmers the kind of assistance in soil and water conservation they cannot provide for themselves. This is the only land this nation has or ever will have. As a nation, we have a stake

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* From an address at the seminar on The Christian Farmer and his Government. Washington, D. C., January, 1956.

in how each farmer uses or abuses his land.

For two decades, the nation has supported a program of technical assistance for soil conservation to individual farmers extending into almost every rural community. The nationwide aspects of this program have been carried out by the Soil Conservation Service. Local application of this nationwide program has been carried out through Soil Conservation Districts organized under State enabling laws and managed by farmers elected by their own community and who have served voluntarily in the interests of soil and water conservation. The phenomenal acceptance of this program and the widespread application of soil and water conservation stands as a monument to the foresightedness of the American people.

Sound soil and water conservation is more than "just good farming." It is a whole system of soil and water management practices on each farm geared in a practical and workable way into good farming. Soil and water conservation obviously is more than just good agronomy, good agricultural engineering, or good forestry. Soil conservation farming is based on the capabilities of the land on each farm, and determined by a scientific soil survey. It is based on the needs of the land for practices that protect and improve the soil while in continued, efficient use. It is geared to the farmer's own special combination of skills and resources.

As a very important supplement to the soil and water conservation program, authorization was given in 1954 through the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act to give greater emphasis to the water component of soil and water conservation. This act provides for technical and cost sharing participation of the Department of Agriculture with watershed communities in dealing with controls and uses of water in the tributary streams and small watersheds. It recognizes the soundness and importance of beginning the control of floods at their source and using water productively before it runs into the rivers and into the sea.

Because of public benefits from soil conservation, it has been national policy for many years to give direct financial assistance through the Agricultural Conservation Program to farmers in carrying out conservation practices. In a similar way, the Farmers Home Administration administers a program of special loans for soil and water conservation. This program was expanded in 1954 and has been particularly helpful to farmers in meeting drought situations.

The Forest Service has responsibility for managing and protecting 150 national forests, comprising 160 million acres. The Forest Service also cooperates with State forestry departments in providing assistance to private forest land owners in managing their forests and protecting them from fire.

The Agricultural Extension Service, through its program that reaches every county of the country, has provided the training in rural leadership that has made it possible for farm people to take a responsible partnership position with the Department of Agriculture in carrying out these conservation programs. The Extension Service continues to provide the educational work required to help keep farm people informed about their part in all the agricultural programs. In a similar way the research agencies of the Department of Agriculture continually provide the basic information on which continuous improvements are made.

Attention, Everybody!

• Do you know of any successful country churches in the United States? There must be hundreds of them. If you are the pastor of an aggressive small town or country church, tell us what you and your church are doing. What community problems have you faced and solved? How was it done? If any pastor is too modest to tell what he has done, tell us what your church has done. We want to help the weaker churches to strength. Address responses to TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Religion and Social Work

• Fourteen leaders in different areas of social work discuss its relation to religion in a new book entitled, *Religion and Social Work*. This volume is edited by F. Ernest Johnson, Professor Emeritus of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, and includes chapters dealing with child care, the aged, state aid for religious social work, cooperation between ministers and social workers, social work in the various religious traditions, the churches and nonsectarian agencies, and the church and human welfare.

"The main contribution to social work that is to be looked for from church and synagogue," said Professor Johnson, in announcing publication of the book, "will be in terms of services rendered by persons whose vision has been clarified and motives cultivated through the ministries of religion and who will devote themselves, some in professional and some in a lay capacity, to promoting the general welfare.

"The symposium has a double purpose: to afford a perspective on the social welfare activities of American churches and synagogues, and to point up issues of theology and social policy that are giving concern both to the ministry and to lay leaders in relation to the social outreach of religion. Each participant writes authoritatively and out of experience, and the concluding chapter attempts both analysis of the total picture and perspective on the future."

The book is the twenty-first in the Religion and Civilization Series published by The Institute for Religious and Social Studies of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and is being distributed by Harper & Brothers, New York.

The authors include the following: Thomas J. Bigham, The General Theological Seminary; E. B. Butler, U. S. Society of St. Vincent de Paul; Leland P. Cary, The Methodist Church; Stanley P. Davies, Community Service of New York; F. Ernest Johnson; Alter F. Landesman, Hebrew Educational Society; Leonard W. Mayo, Association for the Aid of Crippled Children.

BOOK REVIEWS

Bright Future. By James McLeod Carr. John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia. 1956.

High Hours of Methodism. By Charles M. McConnell. Board of Missions of The Methodist Church, New York. 1956.

These books, written by men who are leaders in the Town and Country Church Movement, give us an inside look at the work that has gone on and is going on in two of the larger denominations in the United States. It is interesting that they should have been printed in the same year to be used as study guides in their respective denominations.

Jim Carr's book documents the reasons why he feels that the future is bright for the Town and Country Church. It comes at a time when some people are beginning to think that the Town and Country Church is on the way out because of the shrinking size of the farm population. Examining the situation in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S., Dr. Carr recognizes the problems but tells the positive things that can be done to improve the work. He suggests that the Larger Parish can help us solve some of the difficulties. "Preachers are receiving better training for their work." In the chapter, "This We Can Do," he lists and discusses ten things that can be done to improve the work of the Town and Country Church.

In the final chapter, "Building the Rural Church of Tomorrow," Dr. Carr suggests what the rural church of tomorrow needs in a very practical and concrete way.

Dr. McConnell's book gives us a glimpse into the history, the present status and the future of the Town and Country Church movement within The Methodist Church. Since he has had much to do with the making of this history Dr. McConnell is an ideal person to write about it. With his usual humor and discerning style he traces the history of this movement, which provides a fine background for his analysis for the second chapter, "Methodism's Responsibility in Changing America." This book will take its rightful place along with other writings by Benson Landis and Mark Rich, who are currently writing about the history of The Town and Country Church Movement.

One of the interesting chapters is called, "Methodist Bishops Move In." It is an interesting discussion of the change in the attitude of the leaders of the Methodist Church concerning the work of the rural church. In 1952 the Council of Bishops, in calling a national conference on Town and Country work to be held within the Quadrennium, 1952-1956, stated the purpose of this conference as follows: "To develop an adequate Christian program in Town and Country areas, pertaining to people in their relationship to God, to soil, and all natural resources, and to family, church and community welfare, and to unite all leaders of our church to help establish the Kingdom of God in the towns and in the surrounding countryside."

These two books supplement each other. While written from denominational points of view, they discuss many of the same problems and point to the same solutions for the Town and Country Church. Both of these books help to give one a sense of perspective that is so necessary in the work of the church, as well as many practical suggestions for the improvement of the church at work.

—Richard O. Comfort

Corn and its Early Fathers. By Henry A. Wallace and William L. Brown. The Michigan State University Press, East Lansing, Michigan. 1956. $3.75.

Two authorities on corn write here a systematic account of its history. They believe: "The history behind the corn which went into modern hybrid corn is as dramatic and important as the history of the automobile. It shows how men gradually learned to understand and mold life."

These two experts write in language that this layman reviewer can understand "how the 1920 corn was different from that of 1950 and how the 1850 corn was still different from that which the American Indians grew in the Corn Belt in 1800." Also: "No plant has changed so fast in so short a time as has corn, in the hands of the white man."

The many personalities that have had roles in these series of dramas receive due attention. There was, for example, the obscure monk, Gregor Mendel, who gave to the world an "enlightened interpretation of the breeding behavior of garden peas." Charles Darwin touched this as well as many other scientific arenas. Modern genetic scientists are building on foundations laid by the discoveries of these two. Today, practically all the seed used by farmers in the Corn Belt is "the result of scientific breeding of a sort which did not enter a practical corn farmer's life before 1926."

There may be big ideas in small gardens, these authors point out. The senior author, Mr. Wallace, should know. He records that for a time he carried out some of his own important experiments on hybrid corn in the small backyard of the plot of ground with his house in the city of Des Moines.

George Washington Carver did much at Tuskegee with poor material resources—he also believed that God was in every plant and rock and tree and that there was a creative spiritual force around him. These authors say that there are still opportunities for pioneers, and that they do not always need to work in large research organizations.

There are many references to the religious interests of a good many of those who have had a part in the application of science to the corn plant.

—Benson Y. Landis

How a Small Church Can Have Good Christian Education. By Virgil E. Foster. Harper & Bros., New York. 1956. $2.00.

Small churches have many advantages over big churches, says Virgil E. Foster, editor of the *International Journal of Religious Education.*

Dr. Foster, in detailing the hundreds of ways in which the small church can do a good job, says that the advantage which the large church has over the small one often is psychological rather than actual.

"Many educational experiences center in the community and the home," he says. "Lack of size is likely to be blamed for failures which are actually due to lack of imagination and judgment on the part of the church members.

"The small church should study its assets to make full use of those inherent in its situation.

"The small church is often blessed with strong ties of common interests and family spirit. Its neighborhood membership can be brought together in friendly work groups more easily. Transportation difficulty is less. Library circulation is facilitated. There is a larger proportion of young people, a greater hunger for fellowship, and a greater appreciation of the opportunity the church offers, in the small church."

The book contains a great deal of material on adapting or developing special equipment, including audio-visual, for crowded conditions. It describes how to develop good teachers in a one- or two-room church, how to make use of the church building during the week, how to set up and use a library, how to develop true experiences of worship, and how the family and church can work together in fostering Christian eduaction.

In a discussion of programs for young people, Dr. Foster describes planning, use of materials, leadership and inspiration and enthusiasm which can produce a good youth program in any church regardless of size. The same is true, he says, of materials. "Young people in small churches are just as capable of using good materials as are those in large churches." He says that the best materials are available to the smallest church, and adaptation, necessary for both small and large churches, is no handicap.

Much of the book applies to churches of any size facing crowded conditions—a widespread situation, since church building is not keeping up with the increase in population and the growth of church school enrollment.

—Wendell Kellogg
(Reprinted from the *National Council Outlook*)

Disciples Rural Minister of the Year

• The Rev. Richard W. Geib of Kentland, Indiana, was given the 1956 Disciples' Rural-Minister-of-the-Year Award at the International Convention of the Disciples of Christ assembly last fall.

The Rev. Dale W. Medearis, national director of the denomination's Department of Town and Country Church, presented the award to Mr. Geib. He said that in addition to serving as pastor of the Kentland church and studying for his divinity degree at Butler University School of Religion in Indianapolis, Mr. Geib had acted as adviser to the Newton County Juvenile Court and legal guardian for a family of six, worked on the Town Planning Commission and taught in Kentland High School.

Under Mr. Geib's five-year leadership his congregation increased by forty per cent to 224 resident members and the church building was completely renovated at a cost of $25,000, Mr. Medearis said.

Meanwhile, he added, the young minister established and edited a weekly devotional paper for Kentland which has grown to a statewide circulation of 340 subscribers. In recognition of the latter activity, Mr. Geib has been given a certificate of merit by the Indiana Christian (Disciples) Missionary Society.

Agricultural Milestone

• Oliver H. Kelley, a government worker in Washington, is credited with conceiving the idea that led to the founding of the National Grange in 1867. Among the men who advised and encouraged him in setting up the structure and by-laws of this farm fraternity was A. S. Moss of Fredonia, a town in western New York.

Kelley's first attempt to establish a local grange unit was made in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, early in 1868. Result: a failure. A similar attempt in Penn Yan, N.Y., also ended in failure. But later, with the help of Mr. Moss, Kelley succeeded in organizing a unit in Fredonia. In his book, *Patrons of Husbandry,* Kelley calls Moss "the father of the first genuine grange which lived."

Fredonia Grange No. 1 still lives. And hundreds of other grange units are also very much alive and doing the kind of job that has caused the Grange to be widely acclaimed as a vital force for the welfare of agriculture and the nation.

—*New York Telephone Company*

To a Country Minister

GEORGE FREDERICK WELLS

You aspired in quiet greatness
  To live each day as you should.
You never sought unworthy fame
  But to serve as your Master would.

You did not want cheap smartness,
  You humbly searched for truth,
Studying ever in prayful ways
  To bring your Christ to youth.

Yours was the warmest pastor heart
  As you helped in many a home.
You wished no lonely country child
  In waywardness to roam.

You served in distant mountain fields
  Where the lonely longed to know
You felt the worth of man as man,
  You loved to see them grow.

As you loved others, you too, had friends,
  All wished to have you near.
When pain or sorrow came our way
  Your smile removed all fear.

You found rich prospects in rural homes,
  You preached the Gospel's power.
You toiled with patience the whole day through
  'Till you reached the harvest hour.

You stood four-square a man of God,
  God used you in many an hour;
You bravely smiled at every loss—
  Sustained by His own power.

You had the grace that needs no words
  To make you a blessing real,
For where you were your Christ was too
  Your fervent faith to seal.

Why should we mourn your going
  To your eternal rest?
Love from your spirit lingers,
  A presence within our breast.

Correspondence from Pakistan

November 20, 1956

To the Editor:

I am having a very interesting time adjusting myself to life in Pakistan. Life is much slower than it is at home, and I am getting used to seeing more bicycles, water buffaloes, tongas (horse-drawn taxicabs) and oxcarts on the road than cars. There are some camels and many donkeys that are used as beasts of burden. It is sometimes difficult to see the donkeys under their tremendous loads.

Last week was spent in Lahore visiting schools, colleges, and two villages. This week I am at the theological seminary. It is a small school and the only seminary in West Pakistan. I am staying with one of the seminary families this week. So far we have visited nine villages. Some have had 2,000 people and others have had only a little over 100. Their basic pattern of life is almost the same.

The Christian people here have had a hard time since the creation of Pakistan. There is some discrimination against the Christians by the Muslims—partly because they are a minority group and partly because there are so many poor people here, most of whom are Muslim. The economic situation of many of the people is desperate.

In spite of these conditions I was thrilled to visit three villages today which were quite different. In the first village an evangelist, John Griffin, who had not had very much training, had his people all ready for a service when we arrived. As a part of the service several persons repeated quite lengthy passages of scripture which they had learned. Many were illiterate and yet they seemed to have so much interest and were trying to do their best.

At the second village we had a service out in a courtyard, where we were surrounded by water buffaloes and other animals, which made the setting very rural. The congregation of typical villagers came in late, as do many of our own people at home. The service consisted of the singing of Psalms, scripture reading, prayer, a sermon, and the offering. Of course, the congregation sits on either the bare ground, or on mats or rice straw. The rice crop is quite good this year, and the straw is used in many ways. After the service we had some rice and curry at the pastor's home, along with the tea. And we had just eaten before leaving the first village!

The third village was larger than the second and presented a fine picture of the work being done in this area by the United Presbyterian Church. The pastor, the Rev. Nawab Din, has been in his present parish for over twenty years. With the help of two evangelists, he serves thirty-five village churches. He has services on Sunday and during the week, often having three or four a day. The pastors really have a job here that makes the work of our pastors at home seem simple. The villages are all within a five-mile area. Pastors use bicycles since they have no cars. This pastor has done a grand job. Several of the laymen led in prayer and I was told that the prayers were very good (in Urdu and Punjabi).

As I reflect upon my experiences here in Pakistan so far, it seems to me that a mighty good job is being done—under great difficulties. Staff members are few. Everyone is trying to do several jobs, and there are as many or more committees than we have at home.

The village people here have the same attractiveness of rural people the world over. The boys and girls are often beautiful. But one frequently sees evidence of undernourishment. There is a very high percentage of infant and youth mortality. All the doctors are located in the cities, but some pastors' wives are able to help with the limited knowledge and medicines that they possess.

I have seen some school teachers who are doing a fine job of teaching children their A.B.C.'s. Often little brother or sister come along on the hip of a school child—and sometimes mother and father come to see what is going on. With a minimum of materials and often a maximum of ingenuity the teacher tries to get across a few lessons. One problem is that a child often lapses back into illiteracy after learning to read because of the lack of reading material. Printed matter in Urdu and Punjabi is very limited.

The committee that is guiding my work has outlined the total plan for my stay here. For the next month I am to visit and study villages in six mission areas. From December 20th to January 4th I shall visit several places in India. Upon returning to Pakistan I will be here at the seminary in Gujranwala, where I am to teach several classes. My colleague and I will summarize the reports of the questionnaires that we are using and begin drafting the final report. We have scheduled a conference with the district superintendents of West Pakistan as well as four pastors' conferences after the first of the year. Also, my presence has been requested at several conferences.

Best wishes to all my friends—I'd be glad to have letters from them. My address is: The Theological Seminary, Gujranwala, West Pakistan (in care of Dr. James Brown).

(signed)

RICHARD O. COMFORT
Executive Secretary of the Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches.

• Man is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite. As a result he reaches for the stars, never satisfied with any finite thing. As a consequence he tries to multiply everything to infinitude: his pleasures, his possessions, his ideals. Where the despair is that of infinitude he loses himself in abstract endeavor, in the pursuit of the ideal, without ever getting down to any specific, concrete, everyday thing.

—MARTIN J. HEINECKEN, in *The Moment Before God* (Muhlenberg Press)